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NELIG Meeting - February 7, 2014

New England Library Instruction Group

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NELIG Meeting

February 7, 2014 | 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Tisch Library, Tufts University

When Speaking Feels Like Streaking: Learning to Teach and Present Confidently

By Amanda Good Hennessey, Boston University and Boston Acting Classes

Description:

Would you rather jump out of a plane than speak in front of people? Do you feel that you know and understand your material, but nervousness undermines your ability and confidence to communicate it?

Here's your chance to face these fears and become an empowered speaker.

During this workshop, we will cover:

THE WHY: connecting with your passion about your material

and

THE HOW: making choices regarding vocal tone and variation, body language and movement, appearance, dealing with technology and how to handle those pesky nerves!

Amanda's experience, wisdom and creative technique have helped many people focus on what they like about their work and their research when they present. Her instinctive ability to grasp what works and what doesn't in a presentation is invaluable.

Amanda Good Hennessey received her MFA in Acting from the Actors Studio Drama School in NYC. She currently teaches acting at Boston University, and has also taught at the Huntington Theatre Company, the New York Film Academy and via Boston Acting Classes, a business she runs with her husband. She has coached people from a variety of industries on public speaking. Amanda has performed on stage, in films, industrials and commercials. For more details, see www.bostonactingclasses.com and www.amandagoodhennessey.com.

Minutes

Amanda first walked us through a number of brainstorming exercises:

1) What happens when you have to speak publicly?

Sweating	Tech Stress	Worry about topic's ordinariness
Shaking	Worry about challenges to authority	Judgment
Wardrobe malfunctions	Worry about making mistakes	

NERVES: Try to channel the energy, if possible. Acknowledge it, even to your audience. Remember: more energy is more engaging than less energy; it doesn't have to sabotage everything.

2) What is out of our control when we present?

Temperature of the room Noise from outside

Technology/network Room design

Audience: reaction, size, attention, ability to care, fatigue/hunger,
readiness/openness/background preparation

We can acknowledge much of this: be on their team!

3) What is in our control when we present?

Level of preparation: practice, food/sleep, handouts/examples/lesson plan, having a “Plan B,”
wardrobe (know your audience, know yourself), attitude.

Take control of situations on “our turf” (the library). “The rules of the library are...”

Re: Attitude: Get excited about your presentation and believe it’s important.

Honor where the audience is.

Get the info you need to sell the presentation then connect with the audience
by throwing attention back at them: “I’m here for you.”

Role playing: Three volunteers introduce themselves: one is “low energy” and disinterested; one is uncomfortable and suffering from “imposter syndrome”; one is desperate to be loved.

As an audience, we want to see confidence, genuine enthusiasm, and that you deserve and want to be there. We want presenters to project an attitude that “I have something valuable to share with you.”

Don’t bring your bad day up on the stage.

Remember that YOU are the host of this experience. Act like a good host.

Imagine a positive outcome – visualize success!

Use your voice to stay engaging: don’t be a monotone speaker.

Vary: cadence/pace

Inflection

Facial expression/countenance

Volume

Pauses

Know your key points and don't rush those.

Movement: stillness of power; be still during your key points.

Be mindful of your stance: be powerful and solid.

Attitude can change immediately with stance: be BIG and OPEN.

Voice: Use your diaphragm: breath through your whole body cavity and use this air to project volume (don't project through your throat: you'll lose your voice!).

Don't fall into "vocal fry" (often heard from teenage girls/young women) – it's a sign you're not using enough air to project.

Don't rush: think about bringing your audience along on a journey: you want them to experience the story with you.

Body language: Make your body mirror your language. If you think you have weird nervous habits, have a friend or colleague film you (or film yourself).

Do you use slides?

Use large font for notes so you can see them better from the podium

Choreograph slide changes in your notes: use a highlighter or spell it out: "CHANGE SLIDE"

Don't compete with your slides: keep the slides focused and simple

Don't look at your slides if you don't have to!

Ending the presentation: You're the host, so tell people what to do: "My part is done. I can now answer questions," etc. You can also reiterate your main points.

Other tips:

- Think about transitions between different parts of the presentation.
- Choreograph screen demos
- Embrace the mystery of Q&A: you don't have to have all the answers
- If you're team teaching: if you need more rehearsal time with your partner, ask!
- Do you have extra adrenaline? Figure out a way to get the extra energy out: take a walk, do laps, push ups; eat and drink mindfully (not too much caffeine).
- Hear bad voices in your head? Give yourself permission not to be perfect; change the voices.
- REMEMBER: your audience assumes you're knowledgeable and they WANT to like you.
- Giving feedback gracefully: ask whether they're open to receiving feedback, and ask questions:
 "Are you open to hearing some feedback?" "I saw you made this point...tell me about that choice." If someone asks you for feedback: "I have some thoughts, but what specifically are you curious about?"
 - o REMEMBER: you are not your performance: critique the performance not the person.
- Imperfection/failure is a growth opportunity. Always be learning.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathrine C. Aydelott

NELIG Secretary
